

**General Topics :: Early church fathers writings**

**Early church fathers writings , on: 2012/1/30 20:24**

My friend and i want to do a study into some of the early church fathers writings from the first couple centuries after Christ. If you know some of their names like Irenaeus, Ignatius, Clement, Polycarp, Origen, Clement, Papias, etc. I really would like to know where they stood on certain doctrines and just what they believed and said knowing that they came right after the apostles and some of them knew them personally. From my understanding many of them believed you could lose your salvation and I heard also that one of them thought the Shepherd of Hermas was possibly inspired text at one time. Does anyone know of these writings or actually read any of these before? What is your opinion on them? Should i be very careful about reading this material?

**Re: Early church fathers writings - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2012/1/30 20:29**

Dear Brother,

This is a great subject worthy of study. We have put up on the main page of the Text Sermons an Early Church Dictionary with over 120 topics done:

<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=category&cid=849>

Also David Bercot's Early Church Dictionary is a good resource to have to read on various topics what were some of the early church fathers believing in those times. Not all that the early church fathers held to were in perfect balance. But many of them had a great balance on the Fear of the Lord and Grace.

**Re: , on: 2012/1/30 21:12**

great i will take a look, thank you.

**Re: Early church fathers writings - posted by twayneb (), on: 2012/1/31 7:32**

bible4life: If you use e-sword you can download the works of the antenicene fathers. They are searchable there by word, etc., just like the Bible on esword.

**Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/1/31 9:02**

I have always wondered how they got the title "Early Church Fathers"?

That title has seemed to give them influence over the original scriptures.

I have always only thought of the NT Writers as the "Early Church Fathers", if that term must be used.

Why can't they be called Early Church Christians or Elders?

"Fathers" is so RCC and gives them too much power to negate what the Scriptures say. Some people refer to their writings as if they were Holy Ghost breathed.

Just my observations through the years.

Pilgrim

**Re: Early church fathers writings - posted by rnieman, on: 2012/1/31 9:48**

Hello bible4life, the following is should help.

<http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html>

"From my understanding many of them believed you could lose your salvation"

All Pre-Nicene fathers believed this as did most of the Post-Nicene leading up to the reformation where eternal security gained traction.

Russ

**Re: - posted by ArtB (), on: 2012/1/31 13:42**

Russ writes: "From my understanding many of them believed you could lose your salvation"

All Pre-Nicene fathers believed this as did most of the Post-Nicene leading up to the reformation where eternal security gained traction.

This simply is not true. Many believed in Predestination. Included among them is Jesus, Paul, Peter. Predestination means God foreknew who would be saved.

Additional info is given in the post above on the Early Church Fathers under 'Free-will and predestination' in the URL in post 2 by the moderator.

Augustine also believed in Predestination.

In 428 a youth from Hippo named Hilary and the theologian Prosper wrote to Augustine from Gaul that people in Marseilles were disturbed by his "new theory" which they believed made preaching useless. How could the number of the elect be fixed? Does it not depend on human free will? If God already has determined salvation and damnation, would that not undermine all human effort? Augustine replied to them in The Predestination of the Saints and The Gift of Perseverance, holding to the idea that people do not believe in order to be elected but that they are elected to believe, usually quoting Paul for support. He argued that Paul believed as he does and yet continued to preach.

Jesus on Predestination:

Jn 10:22-30

At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." NASU

This is why we preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that His Sheep hear His voice, and His sheep recognize His voice, and they follow Him.

**Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/1/31 14:04**

If God did not know who would be saved then He would not be God.

But, because God is God, He chooses to be self-limiting and allow us to exercise free-choice that He has given us. But, yes, He knows who will exercise their free-choice and choose Him.

Pilgrim

**Re: , on: 2012/1/31 14:28**

And so we Jesus and the New Testament behind and depart to the writings of men.

Blaine Scogin

**Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/1/31 14:53**

Hey Blaine,

Quote:

-----And so we leave Jesus and the New Testament behind and depart to the writings of men.

That's exactly what I'm saying. And nowhere do I see the Apostles referring to each other as "Church Fathers".

The very term "father", denotes a relationship either through adoption, genetically or spiritually.

Pilgrim

**Re: , on: 2012/1/31 15:01**

It is very important for us to examine how the church fathers or whatever we like to call them, understood doctrine. None of them would have 100% understanding - no-one has not even Paul who admitted he was giving his own understanding on certain points, and there would be error, but when they are just about in agreement on anything then we must take that seriously, being so close to pure apostolic teaching.

They taught holiness doctrine, and did not teach original sin, two things that the church since Augustine have departed from.

[http://www.enterhisrest.org/testimonies/church\\_fathers.pdf](http://www.enterhisrest.org/testimonies/church_fathers.pdf)

**Re: Predestination - posted by ArtB (), on: 2012/1/31 15:02**

Here is Paul informing the church of the fact of Predestination. I'll write what Paul wrote, and then I will translate it into English, that all may understand.

Ephesians 4-13:

4. He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world (i.e. Cosmos), that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

God knew us, chose us, before the foundation of the world, and that we would be Holy and Blameless before Him

5. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

We were predestined to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to His kind will.

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

And by His grace, this, God freely bestowed upon us in Jesus.

7. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

In Jesus we have redemption through His BLOOD, the forgiveness of our sins, by His rich graces we are redeemed.

8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight

It's a gift to us, well planned out before time.

9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

He revealed this truth of his kind intention through Jesus Christ

10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.

According to God's timing and plan etc.

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

We Have Obtained (past tense) an inheritance, as predestined according to God's will, work, and purpose

12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

The early Christians receiving the fulfillment of the above plans of God first.

13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise

We listened to the message of truth (gospel), and we believed Jesus message of our salvation, Thereby this faith we were sealed in Jesus with the Holy Spirit Jesus promised us (the indwelling Paraclete, God in me).

14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

The Holy Spirit in us is Jesus's pledge (pledge = Security down payment) of our inheritance until (the time of) the full ransom of Jesus's acquisition of us unto the praise of His glory.

Eph 2:1-10

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

And Paul wrote This about Predestination:

Ro 9:6-26

6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; 7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. 9 For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON." 10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, 12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." 13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! 15 For He says to Moses, " I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." 16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

22 What IF God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. 25 As He says also in Hosea,

" I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,'  
AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'"

26 "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."

NASU

However, Paul does write about the salvation of the Jews in Romans Chapter 11

Ro 11:25-32

25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery  $\hat{A}$ — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation  $\hat{A}$ — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

"THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,  
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."

27 "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,  
WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. 32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

NASU

From the above, it is plain to see that we are all Predestined by God from the Foundations of the Cosmos, saved not by our works, but by His mercy, Love, Kindness, and compassion for us. For God Predestined Jews and gentiles to be purified in the fiery Cauldron of the Cosmos, but predestined us to enter the Kingdom, which He created for us at the same time He made The Cosmos.

**Re: Pilgrim778, on: 2012/1/31 15:51**

Howdy Pilgrim. Chuckke....Sorry bro could not resist doing that. I do agree with you. Jesus said in Mat.23 to not call anyone on earth father. For you have one Father and he is in heaven. If we are going to study anything written by the Father, let it be the glorious revelation of his Son Jesus. Those other dudes don't do it for me. Jesus does.

Blaine

**Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/1/31 18:47**

I had not read anything from the "Church Fathers" for a large part of my Christian walk. When I did finally read some of their writings I realized that my walk had not been hampered by ignorance of their writings.

Pilgrim

**Re: - posted by rnieman, on: 2012/1/31 19:04**

Hello ARTB, Augustine is not Pre-Nicene, he's post. You will also be very hard pressed to find post Nicene holding to Augustine's version of Predestination. thanks russ

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/1/31 20:13**

Quote:

----- Should i be very careful about reading this material?  
-----

Bible 4life, I would agree that you exercise discretion - not merely because of this material itself, but because of you personally. The Christian tradition is rich with literary contributions, and you could find yourself running down no end of many trials. It will prove unfruitful for you. You want to remain focused in your priorities. I suggest you aim for foundational material first - not just in a hit and miss fashion, but in an orderly, concise, and directed way. A good place to start is a Biblical interpretation course, and then other subjects which are relevant to you now. Here are sites you may wish to check out: <http://christiancourses.com/> Or this one: <http://www.biblicaltraining.org/>

If you have a well-prepared foundation, you will be equipped to apply thoughtful critical judgment to the ideas of other people - be they the Church fathers or modern Christian movements - or more importantly, your own life and relationships.

Why not share my suggestions with your friend. You could pray for guidance together in this matter, and then encourage each other to keep focused on your goals.

May God grant you wise discernment,  
Diane

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/1/31 20:30**

oh... I forgot to mention: On the Biblical Training website there is a fabulous lecture on the Church Fathers - especially Tertullian and how his ideas affected theological thought down the centuries. I think it's a church history lecture.

blessings

Diane

**Re: Predestination - posted by ArtB (), on: 2012/1/31 22:05**

rnieman on 2012/1/31 16:04:06 wrote:

Quote:  
-----Hello ARTB, Augustine is not Pre-Nicene, he's post. You will also be very hard pressed to find post Nicene holding to Augustine's version of Predestination. thanks russ  
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I appreciate your reply rnieman.

There is no real difference between Predestined and foreknew.

Please note that Pre-Nicene and ante-Nicene both have the same meaning, 'Before the Nicene Creed'.

I quoted Jesus words on predestination. He declared that His sheep will recognize His voice, the voice of their good and faithful Shepherd. For this to be true, they must somehow foreknew the voice of Jesus, thus they trust and come to Him. This, to recognize the voice of Jesus is a form of predestination, it requires a foreknowledge of Jesus voice. This makes them an elect.

Last I looked, Paul is also pre-nicene. The Apostle Paul of whom I quoted quoted extensively on the validity of predestination of God's Children. Did you read those quotes? What do you think Paul means.

Just this one example by the Apostle Paul ought to convince of Predestination:

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:11-13). My post you responded went into more detail.

And, Romans Paul reiterates the Doctrine of Predestination and the Role of The Holy Spirit in the Predestination process.

When did God Predestined (foreknew) us?

Eph 1:4-5 He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ...

How could God choose us before the Cosmos was created if we were not predestined to be saved? The scripture does not say that God will give us a chance to be holy and blameless, otherwise, if we fail, to Hell we go.

1 Pe 1:17-21 WE ARE REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.

17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD, AS OF A LAMB UNBLEMISHED AND SPOTLESS, THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. 20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but h

as appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. NASU

Finally, from the Sermonindex reference of the early Church fathers in post # 2 this thread, we have these following pre-Nicene comments from

<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=26991>

### III. Predestination and foreknowledge of God (Top)

Please note the definition of the word foreknowledge.

foreknowledge: Knowledge or awareness of something before its existence.

If you have foreknowledge of an event that WILL occur: then that event must be predestined to occur.

The comments on predestination (i.e. foreknowledge) are from (Apostle Peter), Justin Martyr (160 AD), Irenaeus (A.D. 180), Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195), and -

Tertullian (A.D. 198) Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.4 pg.23 who wrote:

"We are they "upon whom the ends of the ages have met, having ended their course." We have been predestined by God, before the world was, (to arise) in the extreme end of the times. And so we are trained by God for the purpose of chastising, and (so to say) emasculating, the world. We are the circumcision - spiritual and carnal - of all things; for both in the spirit and in the flesh we circumcise worldly principles."

But the bottom line is not what the opinions of Church Fathers have to say on the topic, but what the NT of the Bible actually has to say on Predestination, which ought to be given the ultimate source. God's word is written down, The words of all others are commentary. They are helpful, but they must be in agreement with the actual scriptures.

Ro 8:26-39

In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him FREELY GIVE US all things? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written,

"FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG;  
WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. NASU

These are irresistible positive statements by Paul of God's work in us, whom He Predestined (foreknew).

God does not leave it to chance the bright future He has planned for His children, both gentiles and Jews. Good fathers



seek a good future for their children, though in our imperfection we often err, but we being Gods children, He seeks our good future, and He never errs. That is why He gave us the indwelling Holy Spirit. For it is the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit working within us to enable the good God created us to do, that guarantees our predestination, and WHOM p rays on our behalf, even when we ourselves do not know what to pray for.